

**Remarks by Hon. Randy R. Koschnick
Director of State Courts
Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Judicial Conference**

November 6, 2019
Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin

Thank you, Chief Justice Roggensack. Welcome everyone to this year's Judicial Conference. Good to see you all.

I have to say I was excited when I heard the theme of this year's conference was "Emerging Issues in Neuroscience."

We have a number of expert presenters who will handle topics in neuroscience, and I look forward to learning from them as I'm sure you do.

I'm here to give you an update on some of our accomplishments during the last year and to let you know about some of the innovative programs we are working on to support your work as judges.

But first, I want to thank the organizers of this year's conference, including the Office of Judicial Education, the Judicial Education Committee, and the Judicial Conference Executive Committee.

The annual meeting is not only a great opportunity for you to take advantage of our in-person educational offerings, but also to network and learn from your fellow judges and court staff. It also gives judges who serve on Judicial Conference committees an opportunity to meet in person to discuss issues crucial to the court system.

Thank you to all of you who share your experience and knowledge on these committees and to those of you who participate on the other committees that help guide the court system. There's a tremendous amount of institutional knowledge in this room, and we are fortunate to be able to take advantage of it.

I also want to thank some of our judges who have taken the time to help legislators and others understand the value of the work done by the Judiciary.

If you happened to see the public hearing on the Judgeship bill before the Joint Committee on Finance on Oct. 2, you know a number of your colleagues are very passionate and effective communicators.

Chief Judge Jim Morrison, Judge Anna Becker, Judge Guy Dutcher, Judge Rod Smeltzer, Judge Jeff Froehlich were all very persuasive, as was Diane Fremgen, Deputy Director for Court

Operations. They explained in great detail some of the complexities of today's judicial workload and what it takes to keep our courts running smoothly.

Their testimony effectively demonstrated the need for new judgeships, beyond just the numbers contained in the workload study. They explained what a judge may face in a given day and the varied workload by case type, and the serious nature of decisions they make. They described some of the challenges of running treatment court programs, which can be very effective, but also time consuming.

I'd also like to thank other judges who may have met with their legislators or county boards to build support of new judgeships, as well as Dean Stensberg, Deputy Director for Management Services, for his tireless work behind the scenes.

Unfortunately, the bill has not yet advanced out of committee. We remain hopeful that the bill will advance in the spring, before the end of the session.

This would complement the additional state budget resources provided to prosecutors and public defenders and improve the efficiency of our justice system overall.

Chief Justice Roggensack highlighted a few initiatives and innovative programs, such as the new Office of Research and Justice Statistics, appellate eFiling and treatment courts.

Another area of innovation in support of judges is Judicial Education.

This year's conference features national-level presenters we would not normally be able to attract. But we took advantage of the opportunity presented by a number of top-notch national organizations, including the National Center for State Courts, American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Federal Judicial Center, and the American Bar Association. This is a unique opportunity, and we are hope you can use what you learn here in your courtroom.

Another example of innovation in judicial education training is the upcoming Digital Evidence Bootcamp. This initiative, conceived by Chief Judge Jim Morrison, Judge Mark McGinnis and Dave Perlman, will provide training on search and seizure, statements, and admissibility issues presented by digital evidence.

The idea here is that about two dozen judges will go through intensive training on these subjects, and then turn around, and present what they learned to judges in their own counties or districts.

I am a strong proponent of the idea of taking what you've learned at a judicial education program – no matter where it's held – and sharing it with your fellow judges. This is still under development, but I think you'll hear more about it in coming weeks.

The Office of Judicial Education is finding other innovative ways to connect with you:

- There's an electronic newsletter delivered to you monthly to let you know of approaching education and training opportunities.

- There's a new Judicial Education resources page on the newly redesigned CourtNet, with links to articles, videos, and information on trending topics. Recent entries address digital evidence, trauma-informed practices, and issues in juvenile justice, for example.

By the way, I hope that you all had a chance to explore the new CourtNet. Thank you Jean and CCAP for making a more friendly and useful interface to a very important tool for our judges.

- There's also a brand new feature on the online resources page called "video shorts." The first installment features Judicial Education Specialist Dave Perlman explaining recommended and required steps in properly accepting a plea. This video is under five minutes long and boils down what can be a fairly complicated process.
- Judicial Education is also posting Dave's synopses of select decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court, the Wisconsin Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. "Perlman's Pearls," as they are known, are designed to help you understand how these newly rendered opinions may potentially impact some of your pending cases.

Some of these resources will be highlighted in an Office of Judicial Education update video on Friday morning, so please don't miss it.

And, if you'd rather see Dave Perlman in something other than his video shorts, he will be presenting updates on the Fourth and Fifth Amendments during a session here on Friday morning.

I, too, want to thank Karla Baumgartner for her years of service to the Judiciary and putting the Office of Judicial Education on course to serve us well for years to come. We are fortunate that she has agreed to stick around a little while longer to help us make the transition.

No matter how long you've been on the bench, there are always changes you need to keep up with. These may be changes in the law, changes in technology, or changes in the way you search for the information you need. Or, you may simply have questions about your paycheck, benefits and tax forms.

You will find people here to help, including District Court Administrators, and staff from Court Operations, CCAP, Management Services, the State Law Library, and the Children's Court Improvement Program. These people are also available everyday, whether you are a new judge or an old judge, sometimes referred to as a used judge.

Being a judge is tough work. You are routinely called on to confront some of societies' most desperate situations, with the expectation that you will bring some sort of resolution. People's lives and livelihoods often hang in the balance. You see the worst of family relations, children in need, and victims of violence and criminal behavior.

Maybe this is why you don't see job postings for judges in the classified section. Who in their right mind would want to deal with this?

Most of you in this room have chosen to be judges because you care about justice and the Rule of Law. Or, you may have a deep interest in legal theory and how the law may be applied to real-life situations. Perhaps there are even a few of you who really had no idea of what you were getting into... Sorry about that.

Either way, you are here, and we are here for you. Please don't hesitate to connect with my staff if we can help. And please don't hesitate to introduce yourselves to each other and take advantage of the knowledge in this room.

Thank you for all you do. Enjoy the conference.